

# CAMBO WRAPAROUND

## Child Care Practice

### BITING POLICY

Biting is a common problem with young children, parents become anxious if their child is biting, whilst the parents of the bitten child get concerned for their protection.

If a child bites:

- Response should be in a calm and quiet manner.
- Separate the children.
- The child who has bitten will be comforted and tended to by one member of staff.
- A second member of staff will deal with the child who has done the biting in an age/stage development appropriate way. It is made clear that biting is unacceptable behaviour. This can be conveyed by voice tone and or body language. Simple words will be used to convey that it would really hurt to be bitten.

If the skin is broken:-

- If the wound is bleeding it should be allowed to bleed as covering the wound can increase the risk of infection.
- Staff should wear gloves when dealing with bodily fluids.
- In cases where the bite has broken the child's skin, a senior member of staff must contact the parent/carer of the child immediately. This phone call should be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent/carer and offer an explanation of the procedure which has been followed. You will need to advise the parents/carers to contact the child's GP.
- If further guidance is required staff should contact the local Health Protection Unit (HPU) 0300 303 8596 option 1.

If the skin is not broken (we do not want to worry parents/carers unnecessarily):-

- Staff should wait 45/60 minutes and then check if there is bruising or a bite mark still present. If there is no obvious mark or bruising this can then be discussed with the parents/carers at collection time.
- If after 45/60 mins the bite has left the child with a bite mark or bruising then a senior member of staff should contact the parents of the child to inform them of the incident.
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Once the initial trauma has been dealt with the children will be reintroduced together (even if the bitten child is still upset/crying as the biter will see the result of their actions).

Where possible it is good practice for the biter to help tend to the bitten i.e. fetch a tissue and for the biter to say 'sorry'.

Once the above procedure has been followed both children will be encouraged re-join the activities.

The biting incident must be logged in the accident/incident book by the member of staff who witnessed the incident and must be signed by the parent/carer of the bitten child at the end of the session.

The parent/carer of the child who did the biting will also be informed of the incident. This should be done in a tactful, sensitive and supportive way, e.g.

- mention that their child was involved in an incident with another child and explain what happened. Parents/carers will be **not** be advised of the identity of the other child involved. Staff should be aware that if the child is old enough they are likely to tell their parents/carers who is responsible for biting them, but we should not confirm this if asked.
- Then explain that this is a phase children go through and how we deal with this type of behaviour.
- Reassure the parent/carer that this is not a problem and ask them to let us know if their child does this at home.
- Tell them that we will let them know if this happens again.

Where a child is consistently biting the child's Key Person will take responsibility to observe and record any patterns in behaviour and share them with the team. The Key Person should approach the parents/carers. This should lead to an ongoing and co-operative effort between home and the Pre-School.

- Should the child continue with this behaviour the Manager will need to be involved in discussions with the parent/carer.
- The child should be shadowed on a daily basis by either the Key Person or another member of staff.
- During this time daily records and observations must be kept so that the possible reasons for biting can be identified.
- Shadowing should continue until the child has not bitten or attempted to bite for several weeks and all adults concerned are satisfied that the child has overcome this phase and no longer poses a threat to other children.

Where biting recurs or if there is more than one child biting the following needs to be applied by the Manager:

- Ensure the children's routine is not overly disrupted.
- Ensure the children have sufficient supervision and stimulation.
- Ensure staff are fully aware of this policy and how to interact with the children who are biting.

**The following may help to identify why the child has bitten and how the child can be helped:**

- Biting may happen impulsively through lack of self control, almost as if it is done because there is something there to bite. A kiss or a cuddle can quickly turn into a bite and even though in this situation the biting is unintentional, it is still appropriate for the adult to show disapproval.
- Children tend to explore everything with their mouths, both inanimate objects and people. This may increase when teeth are coming, since applying pressure on the gums through biting may be comforting.
- Excitement and over stimulation often creates tension and excess energy which unfortunately some children get out of their system through biting. This can be dealt with best by knowing who these children are in advance and channelling their happiness and excitement when it cannot be contained.

- This case of biting often eludes staff as the child may appear to be and actually is happy before they bite. Time to calm down and get back in control, offered as help and not a punishment may be valuable in this situation.
- Children like to create an effect, to make something happen and some children discover that biting accomplishes this.
- Biting another child is usually followed by a spectacular reaction. The very young child, who cannot understand how much it hurts the victim, finds the response rewarding and interesting and may repeat for this reason.
- Toddlers experience a great deal of frustration and sometimes express this through biting.
- There is often an upsurge in biting just before toddlers are able to communicate with words.
- Children faced with too many challenges and pressures may bite.
- Children whose play is interfered with constantly by other children may bite.
- Altering the situation or the physical environment can reduce the occurrence of biting.
- If a child has bitten another child on more than 2/3 occasions, the parents/carers of the child who is biting must be invited into Pre-School for a conversation with the Manager. The Manager needs to discuss with them how best to work together.

**The Manager needs to:**

- Reassure the parents/carers that this is a phase children can go through and with the right intervention can be minimized until the child has grown out of the phase.
- Ask if there have been any changes at home that have not been brought to our attention.
- Ask the parents/carers if they are experiencing the same at home and if so, have they noticed any patterns.
- Agree the most appropriate action going forward and time scales for a review.
- Make notes of the meeting and the agreed time scales.

**In extreme cases:**

- If the child continues to bite and despite every attempt by Pre-School to prevent this it does not stop, then the parents/carers need to be advised that it may be appropriate for the child to be taken out of Pre-School for a short period of time. Sometimes this change of environment and routine can break the cycle.

We can never promise that a child will not be bitten only that we will follow this policy.